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SOURCE Minju Choson

FARMERS COMPLAIN NORTH KOREAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT VIOLATES PRIVATE OWNERSHIP RIGHTS

Farmers' Complaint

A letter written by two North Korean farmers, Kim Yong-kun and Chang Song-myong, of Hamhung City, Hamgyong-namdo, and published in the Minju Choson, official organ of the cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on 18 January 1953, made the following complaint.

"In 1951, the Hamhung People's Committee repossessed 300 p'yong [one p'yong equals 36 square feet] of land and 35 fruit trees from Farmer Chang Song-myong. In February 1953, the Hamhung People's Committee repossessed 400 p'yong of land and 60 fruit trees from Kim Yong-kun. The Hamhung People's Committee gave the land and fruit trees it took away from us to a railroad maintenance group to cultivate as a part-time farming project.

"We believe that we have the ownership rights to our land and fruit trees, and that the action of the Hamhung People's Committee is unjust."

The Minju Choson, commenting on the farmers' complaint, said:

"By repossessing the land and fruit trees from Farmers Kim Yong-kun and Chang Song-myong, the Hamhung People's Committee has infringed upon the rights of these farmers and violated the state law.

"The central government took a practical step to protect the land ownership of farmers by issuing Cabinet Instruction No 2 on Land Administration on 7 January 1950. Article 8 of this instruction [given below] forbids violation of land ownership rights. The local people's committee is not authorized to repossess or transfer the title of privately owned land. Repossession or transfer of the title of land is authorized only in case of national need."

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Law Regarding Land Reform

According to Article 8 of the Cabinet Instruction No 2, as published in Naegak Kongbo (Cabinet Gazette) 26 January 1950, the land distributed under the North Korean Land Reform Law and the North Korean Land Reclamation Law cannot be confiscated by the government without due process of law. Article 18 says that in case the government plans to use privately owned land, it must obtain the consent of the owner.

According to the Choson Minjujuui Inmingonghwaguk Honbop (Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Section 1, Article 8, private ownership of land and of other real and personal properties is protected by law. Section 2, Article 10, however, states in part that "the state can mobilize private properties to implement national economic plans."

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